

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 /080 W

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R 121353Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5797

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 7971

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EG, US

SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR EILTS' MEETING WITH SADAT

1. AS ALL DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS IN CAIRO KNOW, AMBASSADOR EILTS TRAVELLED TO RAS AL-HIKMA (NEAR MERSA MATRUH) AUGUST 11 TO CONVEY LATEST ISRAELI COUNTER PROPOSALS ON SINAI DISENGAGEMENT TO PRES SADAT. PRESS PLAY OF THIS EVENT AUG 12 IS INTRIGUING.

2. ALL PAPERS CARRY FRONT PAGE ITEM NOTING AMBASSADOR EILTS DELIVERED MESSAGE TO SADAT FROM PRESIDENT FORD IN PRESENCE OF FONMIN FAHMY. REPORTEDLY MESSAGE INCLUDED USG VIEWS AND COMMENT AS WELL AS RESULT OF USG-GOI DISCUSSIONS.

3. HOWEVER, LEAD STORY IN ALL PAPERS ANNOUNCES SADAT HELD IMPORTANT MEETING ATTENDED BY VP MUBARAK, PRIMIN SALIM, FONMIN FAHMY, AND MINWAR GAMASY. AHRAM REPORTS "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUE" WAS DISCUSSED, BUT NO PAPER DIRECTLY
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LINKS THIS MEETING WITH AMB EILTS' PRESENCE AT RAS

AL-HIKMA. THIS IS FIRST TIME SINCE OCTOBER WAR THAT PAPERS HAVE BEEN INDIRECT IN THIS MANNER.

4. EQUALLY INTERESTING IS PRESS PHOTO PLAY. ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR TRAVELLED FROM ALEXANDRIA TO RAS AL-HIKMA IN HELICOPTER WITH ABOVE MENTIONED GOE OFFICIALS, PAPERS' FEATURE PHOTO IS OF SADAT SHAKING HANDS WITH GAMASY WHILE MUBARAK AND SALIM LOOK ON. ONLY AHAM RUNS SECOND PICTURE AS WELL, AND THIS SHOWS SADAT GREETING FAHMY.

5. COMMENT: UNUSUAL REPORTAGE IS CLEARLY RESULT OF GUIDANCE FROM PRESIDENCY PRESS OFFICE. IN LAST AFTERNOON, PROVISIONAL AKHBAR HEADLINE CHANGED FROM "SADAT MEETS EILTS" TO "WITHDRAWAL TALKS". GOE SIGNALS ARE CLEAR. COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP, WHICH WE FIRST HEAR ABOUT IN SADAT'S JULY 22 SPEECH, REPRESENTS NEW IMAGE PROJECTED BY GOE. ARAB WORLD IS PUT ON NOTICE THAT HARD DECISIONS ON DISENGAGEMENT WILL BE MADE BY SENIOR EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS ("NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL") AND WILL REPRESENT A COLLECTIVE DECISION. PERHAPS EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT IS SIGNAL THAT ARMED FORCES, PERSONIFIED BY GEN GAMASY, ARE FOUR SQUARE BEHIND PRESIDENT.

6. DESPITE THESE GOE EFFORTS AT BUILDING PUBLIC IMAGES, HOWEVER, EMBASSY STRESSES THAT IN OUR VIEW HARD DECISIONS ARE STILL BEING MADE BY SADAT ALONE, WITH ADVICE OF HIS SENIOR POLITICAL AND MILITARY ADVISORS. THERE IS NEVERTHELESS, CERTAIN SPECULATION IN CAIRO DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES ABOUT REACTION OF ARMED SERVICES TO DISENGAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS. SADAT'S COLLECTIVE APPROACH SEEMS DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT DECISIONS IN THIS CONNECTION HAVE BROAD SUPPORT OF GOE LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING MILITARY.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CAIRO07971
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750278-0429
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750858/aaaabykc.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR EILTS' MEETING WITH SADAT
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EG, US, (SADAT, ANWAR), (EILTS, HERMANN F)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006